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General Assembly

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Agenda items 28 (b) and 124

Social development: social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Note verbale dated 20 April 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and, on behalf of Bangladesh in its capacity as Chair of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has the honour to transmit herewith the text of the outcome document of the general debate on rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth, adopted by consensus on 23 March 2016 by the 134th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Lusaka (see annex).

The Permanent Mission requests that the present note verbale and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 28 (b) and 124.

16-13622 (E) 170816

Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 20 April 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Outcome document of the general debate on rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth

Adopted by consensus on 23 March 2016 by the 134th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Lusaka

As an international organization, as national parliaments and as individual representatives of the people, we are driven by our belief in democracy.

We understand democracy as both a set of values and as a system of institutions that puts those values into practice. At the most fundamental level, we believe that everyone has the right to be heard, and that all voices carry equal weight. Our primary responsibility as parliamentarians is to serve the people and deliver policies and legislation that address their needs and interests.

We understand that there is no single model of democracy. A country's institutions evolve from its particular history, culture and traditions. Equally, we unequivocally reaffirm that the principles of democracy are universal. We reaffirm the core values of democratic parliaments. Those values are about:

- Seeking to be representative of the country's social and political diversity;
- Being open to our citizens and transparent in the conduct of parliamentary business;
- Ensuring accessibility and accountability to our citizens; and
- Performing our work effectively.

We underline that the practices of democracy must constantly change with the times, so that they reflect the societies that nourish them.

Today, our democracies face key challenges. We are challenged to restore and strengthen public confidence in the institutions of democracy. The perception of disconnect, corruption and inauthenticity undermines our institutions and the image of politics and politicians. Voter turnout in elections has tended to decrease over time, especially among young people. Barriers to democracy, and the tendency for any part of the population to turn their backs on our institutions, are a concern to us all. Statistically, young people are least likely to vote and are increasingly disengaged from formal political processes.

This lack of engagement cannot be attributed to apathy. Young people use many different platforms to engage in democracy, such as social media, youth organizations and in some cases, protests and unrest. Rather political institutions have too often failed to open up to young people. Our institutions have not kept up with the fast-changing and increasingly interconnected world into which young people have been born.

More than half of the world today is under 30 years of age. As today's young people become tomorrow's adult population, we run the risk of failing to address

their growing disengagement. Over time, that failure threatens to undermine the very legitimacy of our governments and parliaments. We must act now.

We note with satisfaction that in the 2030 Agenda, governments recognize that peace, justice and strong institutions are essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We have long held that belief. We can and must do more to ensure that parliaments live up to the core values that we have defined for ourselves. We believe that the 2030 Agenda cannot be achieved without inclusively harnessing the power of all parts of our societies. Harnessing the dynamism of young people is a top priority as they will be the prime beneficiaries of the Agenda's results. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development now provides an opportunity to renew momentum for strengthening the institutions of democracy.

Our response to rising extremism must be based on more democracy, not less. Radicalism can only be defeated if we give young people the opportunities they deserve. We must stand firm in our beliefs and not be tempted into undemocratic responses to the challenges facing us.

It is time to take action for a democratic renaissance. And we can start rejuvenating democracy today by giving voice to youth. Citizens of all ages have a role to play in rejuvenating democracy. However, young people are now the majority of the world population. They are critical thinkers, change makers and bearers of fresh ideas. That is why we are convinced that young people are ideally placed to be the key agents of a democratic renaissance. We therefore need to make sure that we give voice to youth and that we are ready and able to hear that voice.

Increasing youth participation is a key element of giving voice to youth which will rejuvenate democracy. We are concerned that only 1.9 per cent of the world's parliamentarians are aged under 30. We recognize that we have a duty to create an enabling environment that guarantees young people's participation and galvanizes their leadership. We acknowledge that no decision about youth should be taken without youth. That is why we pledge to increase youth representation in parliament. And that is why we need to link up with youth, both formally and informally. We must reach out to them where they are — on social media platforms, in schools, universities and public spaces. We reaffirm with renewed vigour our commitment to implement the 2010 IPU resolution Youth participation in the democratic process by enhancing young people's connection to the world of politics and facilitating their political representation.

Rejuvenating democracy is about ensuring that everyone is included. Our governments must be based on the will of the people and be accountable to the people for their actions. Healthy institutions of democracy must ensure that power is not concentrated in the hands of the few. Inclusion is necessary not only to ensure that the rights of people are continuously respected and fulfilled, but also to bring all people closer to political institutions and ensure that we make better policy.

Through inclusive parliaments, citizens can shape their democracies according to their own circumstances and better contribute to the make-up of the societies of today and tomorrow.

Rejuvenating democracy is also about adapting our parliaments to our time. It is about rethinking their processes, so as to respond to evolving social and individual needs. By being gender-sensitive in their composition, structures and work, our parliaments can adapt better to the growing evolution of men and

women's roles in society and in the family. Gender-sensitive parliaments have great benefits, in particular to young women and men parliamentarians, as no one should sacrifice their personal life to engage in politics today.

Rejuvenating democracy is about modernizing the functioning of our institutions. Opening up to new technologies makes it possible to usher in a new era of democracy 2.0. The exponential increase in the use of modern technologies and social media, and in access to information has changed the ways that citizens participate. Our parliaments must open up to the online world in their structures and mechanisms, so as to adapt to the expanded space and time of modern communication, interaction and participation.

Rejuvenating democracy is about changing the way politics is done. Citizens rightly expect the highest levels of integrity from us and our institutions. Change will be driven by clean politics, transparent procedures, and anti-corruption policies and laws. They should be implemented by all of us. By honestly fulfilling our mandate as representatives of the people, we will contribute to rebuilding the weakened trust in us and our institutions. We will make our democracies better and stronger if we keep our electoral promises, remain accessible to our citizens, act responsibly, transparently and accountably, and inspire young people through our words and actions.

Rejuvenating democracy is also about delivering for a better future. The voices of future generations need to be included in our political debates and processes. We need to ensure that our posterity has a better quality of life than we do, and can live a healthy life on a healthy planet. We therefore need to make sure that our deliberations and decisions embody the needs of tomorrow's generations.

At this 134th Assembly, many innovative proposals for strengthening democracy and engaging young people have been put forward. We encourage governments and parliaments to experiment with new ideas that could make the institutions of democracy more responsive to the people.

We pledge to rejuvenate democracy including by taking action to:

- Renew and refresh the profile of people who hold political office, so that parliaments and other decision-making bodies are more inclusive of society's social and political diversity;
- Enhance youth representation in our parliaments, including by considering the adoption of quotas, revisiting age restrictions to run for political office, building party political support, entrusting young MPs with leadership positions, and promoting young MPs as role models for other young people; particular attention should be given to the specific situation and needs of young women;
- Reform our parliamentary processes and internal policies to make them more sensitive to the needs of younger women and men, including by considering the adoption of anti-harassment policies, reforming parental leave, and implementing proxy voting;
- Promote the use of modern technologies to enhance transparency and accountability; use innovations such as online petitions, virtual hearings and submissions, and online interactions and voting to bring citizens, and young people in particular, into the parliamentary process;

- Establish specialized parliamentary committees on youth and networks of young parliamentarians to consolidate youth perspectives into parliamentary work; open up parliamentary deliberations to young people, including through regular parliamentary hearings and consultations, as well as through linking up with youth parliaments and councils, student associations and youth NGOs;
- Ensure that political empowerment is promoted in school curricula through civic education and practical initiatives, such as mock parliaments, mock voting and political debating; invest in youth parliaments and councils for young people below the voting age and enhance youth participation in politics by lowering the voting age;
- Include young representatives in international fora and deliberations, in particular at the IPU, by systematically including at least one young man or young woman member in delegations;
- Use the International Day of Democracy (15 September) to celebrate the successes of democracy and face up to its challenges.

It is our duty to rejuvenate democracy to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations. In doing so, we must harness the creativity, energy and enthusiasm of our citizens, particularly of young men and women. We cannot wait for another generation to act. The time to act is now.

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General Assembly

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Agenda items 20, 120, 123 and 124

Sustainable development

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Note verbale dated 20 April 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and, on behalf of Bangladesh in its capacity as Chair of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, adopted by consensus on 23 March 2016 by the 134th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Lusaka (see annex).

The Permanent Mission requests that the present note verbale and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 20, 120, 123 and 124.

16-13626 (E) 180816

Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 20 April 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

Adopted by consensus on 23 March 2016 by the 134th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Lusaka

The President of the Committee, Mr. Anti Avsan (Sweden) opened the session welcoming participants.

Referring to the first two items on the agenda, Mr. Avsan invited the Committee to adopt the report of the previous session at the 133rd Assembly and elect three new members to the Bureau following nominations received by the geopolitical groups: Mr. Alexander Romanovich (Russian Federation), Ms. Afra Rashed Albasti (UAE), and Mr. Al-Fatish Izzeldin Al-Mansour (Sudan).

Mr. Romanovich having returned to the capital, was introduced by Mr. Kostantin Kosachev as a former member of the Bureau also from the Russian Federation. Ms. Albasti talked about her work with women and domestic violence and her interest in international affairs, particularly peacekeeping. As Mr. Al-Mansour was ill, he was absent from the room.

Mr. Avsan proceeded to introduce the two sessions on the programme, which he chaired.

Session 1: Interactive debate on the new election process for the UN Secretary General

Senator Graciela Ortiz, President of the Legislative Studies Committee (Senate of Mexico), and member of the Bureau of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs; Mr. Konstantin Kosachev, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Council of the Federation, Russia; and Ms. Yvonne Terlingen, Representative of the 1 for 7 Billion Campaign

This session provided members with an opportunity to comment on a new appointment process for the selection of the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) as outlined in a Secretariat background note. The note traced the history of the appointment process over 70 years of the United Nations and showed that most of the applicable rules are derived by practice and not from the UN Charter. It is possible for member States to change these rules by a resolution of the General Assembly.

As part of the ongoing reform process of the United Nations, a large number of member States have demanded that the appointment of the UNSG be more transparent and inclusive of the entire membership, through the General Assembly, and not confined to the 15-member Security Council where five permanent members (with veto power) hold most of the decision-making authority. A more democratic selection process would help ensure the impartiality of the UNSG and empower him or her to act as a true representative of the "peoples" referred to in the UN Charter.

The background note proposed seven questions for discussion inquiring into the qualifications for the post of UNSG, the renewability of the term of office, and considerations for gender balance as well as regional representation. Most importantly, the note invited a reflection on the key question of whether the General Assembly should hold a real election and not be limited to approving the one candidate recommended by the Security Council. This would require the Security Council to submit to the General Assembly more than one name.

Elaborating further, Ms. Terlingen gave a detailed presentation of a new appointment process the General Assembly adopted in resolution 69/321 of September 2015. Mr. Kosachev and Ms. Ortiz acted as respondents to her presentation. The following fifteen delegations contributed comments and questions afterwards: Bangladesh, Bahrain, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cuba, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, Portugal, Uganda, South Africa, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, and Zambia.

Ms. Terlingen noted that while the new appointment process represents a step in the right direction, it does not go far enough. She noted two important innovations: first, government-nominated candidates must submit their CVs to the President of the General Assembly and all CVs must be posted online; second, the General Assembly can convene informal public hearings with the candidates. The new process also more explicitly than ever invites woman candidates to come forward and stresses the need to consider gender diversity in this process — which so far has always led to the appointment of only men.

From the standpoint of the 1 for 7 Billion campaign (an umbrella organization of 750 civil society organizations), the new rules should limit the mandate of the UNSG to a single non-renewable term (possibly extended to seven years) in order to enhance the political independence of the UNSG from the P5 and other key members whose support he/she needs to be re-elected. Most of all, the rules should allow the General Assembly to hold a vote on a slate of at least two nominations from the Security Council.

Ms. Terlingen said "the UNSG represents the conscience of the world and plays an important role in helping Member States rise above their national interests". It is important that his or her selection be as inclusive and representative as possible. To this effect, she suggested that parliamentarians should play a role in the process by holding debates on the qualifications required for the post; by helping identify qualified candidates; by scrutinizing the eventual nominations; by proposing questions to be asked of the candidates at the hearings of the General Assembly; by insisting that the UNSG be free to appoint his/her cabinet based on merit alone (i.e., not as patronage appointments); by advocating a single term of office; and, by insisting that the Security Council submit more than one recommendation to the General Assembly, thus making the process more democratic.

In his response, Mr. Kosachev cautioned that any changes to the current system must be carefully considered bearing in mind the long-term consequences. This year's new process, which will lead to the appointment of a new UNSG effective January 2017, is not the only window of opportunity to make changes. For Mr. Kosachev, the mandate of the UNSG as defined in the Charter is primarily of an administrative nature, as head of the Secretariat. The UNSG's political functions are very limited and subject to guidance from the General Assembly. From this

standpoint, it is not wrong for the UNSG to be dependent on the membership instead of being empowered to act alone.

According to Mr. Kosachev, regional rotation of the UNSG is welcome so that the whole world will eventually be represented in the position. Gender balance is also welcome, provided the best qualified person is chosen in the end. On the question of term limits, Mr. Kosachev disagreed with the argument that a single term is more empowering than two consecutive terms. On the key question of whether the P5 members of the Security Council should retain the power to veto a nomination, Mr. Kosachev argued that this system is much more constraining than people think because it forces the P5 and indeed the whole membership of the Security Council to come to consensus.

Ms. Ortiz remarks as a discussant focused on the gender aspects of the selection process. She welcomed that more member States were supportive of women candidates and hoped this would lead to a woman to be elected for the first time in 2016. While noting that the Security Council's control of the process is not democratic, Ms. Ortiz worried that the gender composition of the Security Council is another issue that needs to be addressed. If the Council is to remain in control of the selection, and if the selection is equally open to women as it is to men, then the Council itself needs to be reformed to ensure gender parity. A male-dominated Council is less likely to pick a woman candidate than one in which women are equally represented.

In the ensuing debate with delegates, while a few of them expressed general satisfaction with the status quo, most participants expressed support for further democratization of the UNSG appointment process. These interventions clearly signalled that the selection process must become transparent and involve all member States, not just those who sit on the Security Council, and reinforced the view that the UNSG is accountable to the more representative General Assembly. Two interventions went farther, recommending that the process should end with a vote by the General Assembly on more than one candidate, as is the practice at the IPU. Three interventions supported the idea of a single, non-renewable term.

The debate showed strong support for women candidates to be considered. One intervention specifically suggested that the focus should not be limited to inviting women candidates but more importantly to making sure a woman is actually elected. Several UN agencies have been or are being led by women and there is no question that highly qualified women are available to take the top job of UNSG. To ensure gender balance in the outcome of the selection process, one delegate suggested that a gender "rotation" should be instituted so that the UNSG post will alternate between a man and a woman (i.e., presumably, this will require admitting only male candidates or only female candidates on each occasion).

That parliaments should have a role in the selection process came through quite strongly in the debate. Several speakers expressed support for many of Ms. Terlingen's recommendations, particularly the idea that parliaments hold debates on their governments' nominees and even submit their own proposals. A specific suggestion from the floor was that parliaments need to support the UNSG in his/her efforts to implement key administrative reforms that are required to strengthen the United Nations.

Concluding the debate, participants asked the IPU to transmit the following there questions to all candidates in the running this year:

1. Agenda 2030 will be successful if members of parliament are involved in the development of their national action plans, in monitoring implementation, and in aligning budgets and legislation to the agenda. As UNSG, will you advocate with member States for parliamentary engagement in the implementation of the new 2030 Agenda and attendant SDGs?

2. Numerous GA resolutions and UNSG reports recommend a strong relationship between the UN and national parliaments, as well as with the IPU. As UNSG, what specific actions would you take to strengthen these relationships at global and national levels to more effectively serve the people?

3. As representatives of the people, parliamentarians want to ensure a more democratic UNSG selection process. How do you think parliamentarians, through the IPU, the world organization of parliaments, can have a role in this process?

Session 2: Briefing on the institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Mr. Laszlo Borbely, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chamber of Deputies of Romania; Ms. Paddy Torsney, Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations; Mr. Alessandro Motter, Senior Advisor for economic and social affairs, IPU; Mr. Charles Chauvel, Parliamentary Advisor, Democratic Governance Group, UNDP

Further to a decision of the Bureau at the October 2015 session, the overarching aim of this session was to provide the Committee with a structure enabling it to work as the IPU's main body for a regular review of SDGs implementation over the next 15 years. The panel presented various approaches and elaborated on several concrete suggestions.

After presenting an overview of various new or established review mechanisms, Mr. Motter described the entry points for parliaments to engage in SDGs implementation at three levels: national, regional and global. At the national level, a key role for parliaments is to deepen national ownership of the goals and to ensure a national plan to localize the goals is firmly in place. Key to the accountability role of parliaments is that their governments present to them an annual report of progress on the implementation of the plan. At the global level, Mr. Motter noted, parliaments have an opportunity to contribute to the work of the new High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development that will be the main UN hub for an annual global progress review. Among other things, parliaments should participate in national voluntary reviews and join their national delegations to HLPF sessions.

An initial step all parliaments can take towards implementation is to adopt a motion or a resolution on the SDGs. Mr. Avsan introduced a template resolution the IPU has prepared. He noted that the parliaments of Mali and Trinidad and Tobago have already adopted resolutions and encouraged all delegations in the room to follow suit. He reported that several members of the Bureau, such as Canada, Sudan, Morocco, Norway and Sweden, had pledged to table a resolution this year.

The IPU is gearing up to help parliaments institutionalize the SDGs. Ms. Torsney provided one illustration of this in the form of a self-assessment toolkit the IPU will publish in May. She invited members interested in providing feedback to the toolkit, which is still in draft, to contact her. The delegations of Mali and Lesotho expressed an interest in being part of this exercise.

Exploring the regional level of implementation and review, Mr. Borbely highlighted the case of the Eastern European region. His parliament was host to a regional conference on the SDGs last year and will again convene a meeting in April of this year. He noted how all SDG-related processes present an opportunity to strengthen parliaments' accountability role. In his parliament, the sub-committee for sustainable development will have a key role in mainstreaming the SDSs in the committee system, strengthening policy coherence. He urged the IPU to integrate the SDGs in its new five year strategy and to focus on assisting parliaments in institutionalizing the SDGs in their day-to-day work.

For his part, Mr. Chauvel outlined how the UN is gearing up to help parliaments implement the SDGs at the country level. He recalled that the 2030 Agenda rests on open, inclusive and participatory reporting, a people-centred approach, and evidence-based support. He noted that there is strong agreement in principle that parliaments are a key stakeholder in implementation, along with civil society and other actors, but this will not translate automatically into action to engage or support the parliaments. Proactive efforts will be required. Some of the impetus will need to come from citizens themselves. To help with this, the UN will retool the existing My World survey facility so that people can use it to provide feedback on government policy and services directly to their members of parliament.

The following delegations participated from the floor debate: Cuba, France, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, South Africa, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and Zimbabwe. Their comments elaborated on some of the points made by the panel with further ideas and suggestions. Several comments in particular pointed to the need to strengthen parliaments to allow them to play a strong role in implementation. Two interventions elaborated on the role of the national sustainable development plan as the centerpiece of implementation in each country.

It was agreed that each spring session of the UN Committee will henceforth be utilized to perform three basic tasks: to take stock of global progress on the SDGs (UN reports); to prepare concerned parliaments for the voluntary national reviews to the HLPF; to prompt parliaments to perform a self-assessment of their capacity to implement the SDGs and to showcase best practices in that regard.

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Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Note verbale dated 20 April 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and, on behalf of Bangladesh in its capacity as Chair of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has the honour to transmit herewith the text of the declaration from the general debate on the imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration, endorsed on 21 October 2015 by the 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Geneva (see annex).

The Permanent Mission requests that the present note verbale and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 70 and 124.

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Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 20 April 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Declaration from the general debate on the imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration

Endorsed on 21 October 2015 by the 133rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Geneva

We, parliamentarians from over 135 countries gathered in Geneva at the 133rd IPU Assembly, debated the imperative for fairer, smarter and more humane migration.

International migration in today's world presents multifaceted challenges and opportunities. It has become an increasingly complex global phenomenon, which involves mixed migration flows comprising migrant workers, asylum seekers and individuals who move for a combination of reasons, as well as those who are known as "survival migrants".

The root causes of forced migration are often foreseeable. These include armed conflict, violent extremism, extreme poverty, food insecurity, climate change, forced enrolment in State and non-State armies and militias, harmful traditional practices and gender-based violence. These complex and sometimes novel challenges result in additional risks, especially human trafficking and migrant smuggling, with more and more people found in distress at sea and in deserts. Girls are subjected to particular risks, such as torture, sexual slavery, forced labour and other forms of abuse, both in transit and in destination countries.

This situation calls for action. This action must be guided by the principle that migrants are not numbers, but human beings. As rights-bearers, they are to be treated with dignity and with respect for their human rights, regardless of their motive for leaving their homes or their status as regular or irregular migrants.

We recall that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development urges us to ensure that migration is regulated in an "orderly, safe, regular and responsible" manner. For this purpose, governments must adopt well-managed migration policies that enable migrants to fully develop their potential to contribute to human and economic development.

Migration is an opportunity. We recognize that migration yields significant benefits for host countries and countries of origin, as well as for individuals, families and communities. Destination countries benefit from the diversity that migrants bring: new skills, a much-needed workforce, new contributions to their economies and the opportunity to counter the economic challenges posed by ageing populations. But host societies also face challenges in ensuring fair working conditions for all, as well as social cohesion through appropriate schemes of integration. As far as countries of origin are concerned, they benefit from remittances, investments from diaspora networks and from the newly acquired skills and experiences of returning migrants, but they also have to cope with the

challenges of "brain drain" and separated families, which may result in children being left without proper care.

Migration should be safe. Persons fleeing persecution require special legal protection as refugees. In a context of mixed migration, it is important to ensure that asylum seekers have an opportunity to lodge their claims and be duly heard. The return of persons whose asylum claims have been rejected after a full and fair hearing, and of irregular migrants, must be conducted in a safe and humane manner, with due respect for the principles of non-refoulement and prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, while also upholding the best interests of the child and the right to respect for private and family life.

Similarly, migrant women and children require particular attention and protection from abuse, exploitation and violence. Migrants working in the informal sector require particular social and legal protection, given their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse in such situations.

Migration must be constructive. The social integration of migrants and refugees is best ensured when host countries provide children and young adults with unhindered access to education, and ensure access to employment, health and social services to all, while authorizing family reunification is made possible. Mutual respect for cultural differences is a shared responsibility of host societies and migrants, on the understanding that everyone is bound to respect the laws of the land and is entitled to enjoy his or her human rights. We must recognize the contribution of migrants to our societies, and must enact specific legislation to prohibit discrimination and combat xenophobia.

Migration is a reality. An understanding of the push and pull factors of migration calls for expanding safe and regular channels of migration. In addition, the current situation in the Mediterranean and in other parts of the world and the prevalence of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, as well as xenophobia, call for urgent, coordinated and robust action to save lives, show solidarity and mitigate the effects of sudden and large migration flows.

We parliamentarians have a particular responsibility in this area. We must demonstrate political leadership, listen to and voice the concerns of our constituents, raise awareness, oversee government action and support it, inter alia, by adequately resourcing the responsible bodies. We must also promote the common interest and respect for human dignity and rights above all considerations. This will require redoubling efforts and commitments, and working together across regions, countries, political parties and communities to ensure fair and concerted responses to this global phenomenon.

As parliamentarians, we commit to working towards fairer, smarter and more humane migration, Including through the following action:

Building and implementing a protective legal framework

- Ratify, and ensure the implementation of, conventions protecting the rights of migrants and refugees. These include:
    - The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families,

- The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967),
- The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocols on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants,
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
- The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,
- The Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (ILO Convention No. 97),
- The Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (ILO Convention No. 143),
- The Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (ILO Convention No. 181),
- The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (ILO Convention No. 189),
- as well as other relevant regional and international instruments;
- Encourage legal responses, whether globally or nationally, to address gaps and grey areas in the legal protection of migrants and refugees. These can include, inter alia, the law of the sea on the responsibility for searching and rescuing persons found in distress at sea, and the laws on responsibility for persons fleeing environmental disasters;
- Oversee the implementation of laws and policies and their impact on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees from a human-rights perspective, with a particular focus on refugee protection, gender equality and the rights of the child;

Ensure fairness, non-discrimination and respect for the human rights of migrants

- Revise existing legislation so as to remove any obstacles to access to basic services such as education, health care and social benefits for all migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, regardless of their status;
- Promote and monitor coordination among States in the areas of migration and asylum through bilateral, regional and international procedures, including through consultation mechanisms on responsibility-sharing in hosting refugees, ensuring that migration agreements comply with human rights and international labour standards, and the prosecution of human traffickers;
- Design and implement effective regulation of recruitment, particularly of low-skilled migrant workers, and promote fair recruitment practices;
- Promote safe, regular channels for migration, including legal entry and residence schemes for study, work, humanitarian and family reunification purposes in a fair and responsible manner that does not discriminate against unskilled or low-skilled migrants, women and young men, and that aims to benefit all concerned, i.e. migrants themselves, the host country's population and the economy of both the country of origin and the country of destination;

- Ensure the right to decent work for all, and in particular that non-discriminatory labour standards and the rights enshrined in fundamental ILO Conventions, as well as effective labour inspections, apply to sectors of the economy employing mainly migrant workers, and in particular migrant women, such as domestic work and caring services;
- Protect all migrant workers from discrimination and abuse, such as sexual and other forms of gender-based violence and forced organ-harvesting;
- Revise legislation so as to ensure access to justice for any person on our territory, regardless of nationality and migration status;
- Seek alternatives to the administrative detention of undocumented migrants, and especially of unaccompanied or separated children or entire families, and refrain from criminalizing irregular migration;

Work for social cohesion, and peaceful and inclusive societies

- Lead by example, by speaking out against xenophobia and racism, recognizing the contribution of migrants to society and refraining from referring to migrants in an irregular situation as "illegal" or "clandestine"; challenge and combat stereotypes relating to migrants, in particular migrant young men;
- Build empirically based knowledge and foster balanced public debate on the causes, challenges and benefits of migration, so as to inform national policies; promote the inclusion of migrant perspectives in political and public forums, including the participation of migrants, civil society groups and social partners in parliamentary discussions, inter alia in public and committee hearings;
- Take the lead in communicating rationally and factually on migration, while bearing in mind the human dimension of the issue;
- Promote anti-discrimination legislation, including the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of nationality and migration status, as well as criminal legislation against hate speech in line with the UN-led Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial and religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, aiming to strike a proper balance between freedom of expression and the vital need to protect individuals and communities from discrimination and violence, as enshrined in international law;
- Support and enhance the contributions of the diaspora, inter alia by facilitating their remittances and investments and by ensuring their participation in national decision-making;
- Promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the existing migration-specific goals (target 8.8 on the protection of the rights of migrant workers, in particular women and those in vulnerable situations, and target 10.7 on planned and well-managed migration policies), and the systematic disaggregation of data by migration status.